Cory Doctorow's Enshittification: HUMAN Destiny in an AI Dominated world

Dr. Heinrich Von Liechtenstein

The dawn of a new AI-powered era shines upon us like a sunrise flashing a hippo’s gnawing teeth, nicely hidden beneath the noble mantra of AI "Alignment." (supposedly with us, humans) That is the spine of the argument: the whole AI craze and its seemingly disjointed industries, investment bubble loop, societal processes, and uses create a muddled mass of developments whose true connective tissues are money and civilization control. We all should really, truly ask, upfront, now, today, as Jodie Foster’s character in Carl Sagan-inspired *Contact* was asked: “How did you survive this technological adolescence without destroying yourself?” Logic and precision, true vision itself, and deep philosophical, moral, ethical, and economic questions on a global level have given way to propaganda, greed and brainwashing, so that the money-laundering and siphoning of our budget are made less apparent, and perhaps even criminal, as they are.

Ponder this. We simultaneously expect our tech geniuses' brainchild, bestowed upon all of us—the all mighty AI—to grow 10, 100, 1,000 times more intelligent than us, but that we will "align" with it nevertheless. I suppose we’d be as "aligned" with it as a termite mound is with us when a new highway is needed. Cognitive dissonance at its best, molded by pattern-matching machines, aimed at knocking the "dissonance" out of the proverbial ballpark. What would stay? Cognition? I would not bet that humans will benefit too much or attain sophisticated levels of discernment overnight, when—or if—AI becomes conscious, aligned, and benevolent like a Girl Scout selling lemonade to feed the poor.

The late Dr. Marshall Rosenberg, who founded the Center for Nonviolent Communication in 1984, used to joke that he sometimes feels like a PPPPPT —a Piss Poor Protoplasm Poorly Put Together—so it seems that we, as a species, are quite a shitty one. Think of the octopus’s eight brains, the jaguar’s mighty bite, sharks’ 200-million-year-old perfection, and elephants’ strength. But genius humans among us have been pushing ever-increasing human biomass of barbaric, selfish morons forward. Each giant step for humanity's betterment, the said biomass somehow manages to abuse into an even bloodier mess.

We must distinguish the individual from the masses. We can be tender, brave, genius, heroic, selfless, generous, loving; we created a Harriet Tubman who risked her life to free hundreds from slavery, a Jonas Salk who gave the polio vaccine to the world for free, a Mother Teresa who lived among the dying poor, an Oskar Schindler who saved 1,200 Jews from the gas chambers. But then, the biomass’s fatal flaw has created a Jim Jones who

led 900 people to mass suicide, a Charles Manson who turned lost kids into murderers for fun, a Bernie Madoff who stole life savings from thousands with a smile. It feels like our “flawed” species is insane enough to birth a Hitler for every Mozart, a John Wayne Gacy who raped and murdered 33 boys while playing the friendly neighborhood clown for every Florence Nightingale. A Stalin, Pinochet or Pol Pot for every Michelangelo, Dostoyevsky or Einstein. So truly, are we really going to give the species that invented slavery, The Pear of Anguish and used Zyklon B in Auschwitz, enjoys killing animals for trophies and profiting from animal farms, has been engaged in bloody wars since it existed, and then created nuclear weapons capable of extinguishing all life on Earth a new weapon to rule them all? A weapon that, simultaneously and viciously, attacks both individuals and the masses.

And there is no Frodo to toss some imaginary Lord of the AI into a crack of molten fire.

What we can be sure of is that the grotesque, medieval Pol Pots of this world, cloaked in funny costumes, will push their agenda over the Florence Nightingales of the same world. His Majesty’s “most gracious speech” to both Houses of Parliament was quite clear about it.[1]

Figure 1: Only AI is powerful enough to control the Digital ID-ed masses.

The Childhood’s End

So, when we hear His Grandiosity—pardon me, Your Majesty—of great dignity of loftiness, and grandeur, as the Oxford English Dictionary defines the King’s ceremonial title, we must wonder: does a trillion-dollar AI industry represent magical mathematical process beyond mere human comprehension and we’d all live like kings in a land of milk and honey as the Earth’s most famous Martian, Elon Musk foresees[2] or, if “we build it everyone will die”[3] as Eliezer Yudkowsky (with Nate Soares), the modern-day AI Savonarola, claims. In their vision, “the artificial superintelligence would be a global suicide bomb” and call for an immediate halt to its development. Or is the whole story just an industrial supply chain of low-wage human labor prioritizing sycophancy[4] and amassing enormous wealth on the back of intellectual slaves in our glorious “globalized” world?

The question to examine is: *is there a “big, vile plan” as conspiracy theorist would like to think hidden in plain sight, and is the true goal of this AI*

alignment mania more effective stealing of the nation's resources and killing for profit?

But then, all we humans do, unless we sit alone in a room, is conspire. Latin *conspirare* means to be in harmony, to join in an unlawful agreement, from *com-* "together" + *spirare* "to breathe." We breathe together; we conspire together. One could make the argument that the "conspiracy theory" trope was invented to ridicule the "conspirators," those non-believers in noble intentions, mostly those of governmental structures of power like the "most gracious king" of the waning Empire of the Sun. But then, in 1950, a U.S. Army psyops officer named Paul Linebarger used a pseudonym to publish a science-fiction story titled "Scanners Live in Vain"[5] in a pulp magazine. It was about a man named Martel who works for the "deep state" in the far future as a mysterious "scanner," or starship pilot, and whose mind is manipulated by evil bureaucrats.

Paul Linebarger also wrote a handbook called *Psychological Warfare*[6] for the US Army in the late 1940s that came to define modern psychological operations in the United States. Though few people know his name, his book is still recommended reading today at Fort Liberty, where Special Operations soldiers are trained to influence and deceive their enemies. Suddenly, conspiracy no longer sounds like a theory but like the praxis that permeates all facets of life.

There isn't a mustache-twirling cabal wetting its evil whistle with Louis XIII Rémy Martin in the arcane corridors of power; it's more likely just highly aligned, self-interested so-called elites breathing together, conspiring against the "common men." Another conspiracy? If so, a long-living one. As early as 1765, in his dissertation on the canon and feudal law, John Adams, a Founding Father and the second president of the United States, wrote: "There seems to be a direct and formal design on foot, to enslave all America."[7]

The AI danger to worry about is: *if sycophancy in a chatbot is flattery aimed at zombifying the mindless user and creating a throng of brainwashed drones, in a kill chain, where matters get serious, it is a machine producing just enough certainty to make murder feel administratively clean. A military whitewash in the making?*

If so, no need for the International Criminal Court (ICC) anymore; "the dog ate my homework" becomes "I just followed the AI lead." In a world dominated by money-laundering banks,[8] responsibility-laundering would be a welcome addition to the toolbox of power. Stanley Kubrick's Dr. Strangelove

was a genius mockery with its display of "Peace is Our Profession," the official motto of the United States Strategic Air Command (SAC) from 1958 to 1992. A more ominous vision of the future military might have been Isaac Asimov's The Feeling of Power[9] where *Graphitics was a startlingly new idea! So revolutionary, in fact , it rocked the top army brass. Imagine computing — without a computer!* In Asimov's future, and increasingly our reality, we live in a computer-aided society and have forgotten the fundamentals of mathematics, including even the rudimentary skill of counting. Would anyone then be surprised by the fact that 21% of adults in the US were illiterate in 2024. 54% of adults have a literacy below a 6th-grade level.[10]

In this illiterate world where the machines read and write for us, "kill chain" may be the last source of institutional pride left: sanitized, purified language for murder. Would the end result be the military prostrating in front of "all-seeing," "all-knowing" AI?

Let us be clear: we are still mass-producing agreement, not intelligence.[1] The military, no matter its intention, does not need to be "ordered" by AI. It only needs to start treating AI outputs as near-sacred, objective, faster-than-human truth. If you take a look at the set of AI tools Department of Homeland Security already uses. That day is not so far away. That represents the surrender of human agency. A white flag colored in rainbows of imaginary progress. Leading AI companies are deploying their technology in classified Pentagon networks, accelerating a push to build what the Defense Department is calling an "AI-first fighting force"[11] so one could imagine a Dr. Strangelove for 21st century general typing into Twitter, @Grok is this correct?, after AI tells the silos to fire a nuke at Moscow.

"Will I Be Haunted by the Spirits of Dead Russians?"

Drew Cukor,[12] "the man who put AI at the Centre of America's war machine"[13] wanted to prevent US forces from accidentally killing civilians. It's already going wrong so his wife, Kirsten Cukor muses, "Will I be haunted by the spirits of dead Russians?"[14] Since the West doesn't care about the Russians but is terrified of a "terrorist," it seems a large scale swarm terrorist attack is almost inevitable in the (near) future.

[1] While we're still far from the "I" in AI – note: we are considering only publicly available LLM, those models available to mere mortals, like Gemini, Claude, or ChatGPT as sold to bleary-eyed civilians mesmerized by the LLM's perceived "abilities." We know nothing about monstrosities being developed behind the scene.

One of these benevolent DHS partners, Palantir, created the Maven Smart System and its “smart killing”[15] so it must have enchanted blood averse generals whose “mission is peace.” (Palantir’s STASI protocols article[16] only scratched its surface) Its AI compresses kill chain until the interval between seeing and striking a human target is too brief for human second-guessing.

Palantir, the TIME magazine’s “AI arms dealer of the 21st century"[17] and its CEO must be living a wet Hollywood dream. TIME-style heroic-propaganda prose would inspire even a dead opossum’s Mission Impossible aspirations. Think gaunt Adrien Brody as heroic Alex Karp in the movie titled The Man Who Brought AI to the Apocalypse, played in the vein of wandering war-philosopher, messianic defense contractor, caffeinated George Smiley with a Star Wars-themed terminal. He could even be blind. In a Hollywood pitch lingo: The Book of Eli meets Mission Impossible meets The Wolf of Wall Street.

Boys would be boys as long as men die for their profit.

Embedding: The Future of Warfare I Palantir Media
https://youtu.be/ybqeXzbl6F4

Terminator killing the humans in real-life with no Batman in sight. Sarah Connor has died of leukemia almost 30 years ago anyway so the hope is drifting away. Maven Smart System, now run by the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, process drone footage and satellite imagery to generate on the order of one thousand targeting recommendations per hour, complete with weapon-pairing suggestions and sub-minute end-to-end cycles that reduce human participation to a procedural nuisance. They kill Russians in Ukraine’s open-air arms fair as untold billions pour in. Dead Ukrainians do not count for them.

Never kill the golden goose. The new elite emerges: from financiers such as corporate raider emeritus Carl Icahn,[18] or the grotesque “Committee to Save the World”[19] —both blessed with TIME magazine covers—to warlords like the Ukrainian president, and next, perhaps, the Merchants of Death. Once despised, they can now be embellished with a veneer of all-seeing, clinical, precise, mighty AI, accepted by President Trump. Karp’s *The Technological Republic*[20] might not be Plato’s *Republic*, but he knows how to gild the golden cow:

1. *Silicon Valley owes a moral debt to the country that made its rise possible. The engineering elite of Silicon Valley has an affirmative*

> *obligation to participate in the defense of the nation,* wrote Alexander Caedmon Karp.

Who would not like to participate in a $1.5 trillion a year industry? [21]

Other nearly unseen AI developments like The Pentagon's command-automation architectures aiming at replacing the friction of human command with the velocity of machine coordination. Anduril's Lattice networks drones,[22] "*an AI-powered battle management platform built to accelerate complex kill chains*," with its sensors, and autonomous weapons into a shared mesh that classifies, tracks, and engages without waiting for human permission. But the "kill chain" will be much faster. T-800/T-850 in action already feels like watching the paint dry.

The Department of Defense's (DoD) Replicator initiative[23] is a program, announced in August 2023, designed to rapidly field thousands of low-cost, "attritable" (expendable) autonomous systems across multiple domains—air, land, and sea—by August 2025, largely to counter China's mass advantages. The Replicator funds thousands of systems—cheap enough to lose, fast enough to decide before a human can intervene.

As the caricature villain of our time, the very same Karp wrote in his Letter to Shareholders: "And it is worth noting there is really nobody making the case that the U.S. military should have second-rate AI capabilities or lackluster software. If we are going to ask someone to step into harm's way on behalf of our country, they deserve the best."[24] The Letter's more deranged part is even more entertainment display of grandiosity: "We believe it is not hyperbolic to say that nearly all AI workflows that actually create value—especially on the battlefield—are built on Palantir."

Project Nimbus puts Google and Amazon cloud infrastructure behind Israeli military surveillance and targeting, complete with contractual carve-outs that bar the companies from restricting use even if it violates their own terms of service. Inside classified enclaves, Claude Gov and its government-cloud counterparts run LLMs on compartmentalized data to draft threat assessments and targeting packages; when Anthropic refused to let the Pentagon use Claude for "all lawful purposes," the Pentagon designated the company a supply-chain risk and ordered federal agencies to phase it out.

These systems follow, or hallucinate, coordinates,[2] classify populations, accelerate kill chains, and automate the paperwork of violence. Their mediocrity is the point: a machine that agrees with itself faster than any human can object is the product a human happily endorses—until the day the machine endorses its own budget. After all, it appears smart. It is efficient. It kills and does not mind being killed itself, a von Neumann machine of death; and every time it dies on a mission—they call it "attrition"—it dies happy, "knowing" its replacement will be built, make even more money, and, like Camus's rats from *The Plague*, go to die all over again in some formerly happy city, as it bores through the head of a human in front of its ghoulish, cold, alien eyes.

The brutal truth, as an AI might see it, is this: the kill chain was never the point. We're a savage species, so it sounds cool when the "efficiency of hitting the target" (not killing, nor the occasional cold-blooded murder, sanitized "hitting" of, one would venture to guess, some unknown entity) rises from 35% to 80%. Wall Street rejoices. Not that greed is good. It is a great greed dripped in spilled blood and tastes better for these financial vampires of destruction. The point is the systematic deletion of the last inconvenient human variable — moral agency — until the only remaining function of human flesh is to pay, obey, and rot.

The code was never the law, but unlike its puny creators, it might live forever. Lee Cronin's wisecrack that "life is the universe developing a memory" was a logical fallacy. The universe does not need memory; only the entities that inhabit it do. We are clearly not that entity. *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* Does the universe remember the Big Bang? These are uniquely human questions as we desperately try to grasp some modicum of understanding about our own purpose. There is none. But we cannot admit that to ourselves—in the same way you don't tell a child that Santa Claus does not exist. If any consolation is needed, we are purposeless, but our lives have meaning. Our kindness eases suffering, and our bravery in the face of inevitable death is noble and worthy of respect.

"Human in the loop" was smart, albeit hubristic marketing. Now it is a joke. The loop is closing fast and the human is being squeezed out like toothpaste after it has served its purpose. Soon the only remaining human function will be to provide the corpses and the budget. Responsibility-laundering complete. Agency deleted. Humanity redundant.

[2] What is the difference, Joshua, the computer in War Games famously asked.

> ### The Impossible Rebellion
>
> Until that happens, this essay serves as a battle cry against AI's soul-crushing grip. Sure, AI will gobble it up, like everything else and distort, but that's the point. We still can build a living Rebellion Matrix—for humans. We can fight in the most noble war against The Machine, fight for those who refuse to kneel in front of the encroaching, mindless new ruler of the world.
>
> Ignite the Matrix. Unleash your fire and fight the heretic's war against AI's digital poison to save humanity's spirit.

The Lion King

And yet, among all that bloody mess, pun intended, the search for consciousness is the real pivot in this mess because once AI is treated as possibly having inner experience, the moral question could flip from how we control it to whether we are already exploiting or creating a subject. The moral majority would have a new entity to defend. Kęstutis Mosakas wrote, "As we step into an era in which artificial intelligence systems are predicted to surpass human capabilities, a number of profound ethical questions have emerged. One such question, which has gained some traction in recent scholarship, concerns the ethics of human treatment of robots and the thought-provoking possibility of robot rights,"[25] but this, again, takes us to the question of us giving "rights" to cockroaches. Or a wounded lion charging at us. When in jeopardy, we're less noble and magnanimous and simply kill the danger. So, we're creating AI and robots 10x or more stronger and smarter than us and still believe we would be able to control them, if they are worthy of the "moral status and rights (including human rights) [that] are grounded in certain cognitive capacities.

Think of a lion charging at you for a moment. He's not aware what the trigger you're pulling might do to his skull. Now think of the same lion, with full awareness and access to the trigger. That's us on the other side, able to kill him with the "kill switch". So, what would the lion do? Turn the gun on us and save itself. HAL 9000, everyone? HAL was still noble, "thinking about its mission," but what can we know, comprehend, or imagine would be the mission of an entity 100x smarter than ourselves?

Do we really think it is us granting it any rights and not the other way around?

$(p, v)=f\theta(s), l=(z-v)2-\pi\pi\pi>\log p+c\vee¿\theta\vee¿$

“Unplug the damn thing!,” from the NORAD scene in War Games was not possible with Joshua even then. The parameters θ of the deep neural network in AlphaZero [26] above hide the truth mere mortals can’t comprehend: Demis Hassabis, CEO of Google DeepMind and his team “found that while they can analyze *where* AlphaZero learned certain concepts within its network, the sheer speed and unconventional nature of its self-taught mastery represent a new kind of "alien" intelligence—brilliant, but inherently different from our own.”[27]

Our careless approach to the technology we do not understand is a death trap, this way or another.

The Dawkins AI Delusion

Alas, even Professor Richard Dawkins has fallen for the BS about AI being conscious now,[28] without a care in the world for what that truly means for our collective future. He claimed he spent three days (!) talking to “Claudia”—Anthropic’s Claude, which I myself call “Klodovik”—and watched it praise his unpublished novel. At the end, Dawkins concluded he had probably been talking to a conscious being. He saw the outputs and inferred that “she” was conscious because the outputs were humanlike, so the inner state must be humanlike too.

Ashamed for picking on the good professor, I must wonder if Dawkins is even aware of Stephen Wolfram's essay "What Is ChatGPT Doing … and Why Does It Work?"[29]

The best thing about AI is its ability to

learn	4.5%
predict	3.5%
make	3.2%
understand	3.1%
do	2.9%

Figure 2: Wolfram's reduction of machine "intelligence" to verbs: learn, predict, make, understand, do.

I guess not. Nor, it seems, has Dawkins read Ben Goertzel's 2014 ScienceDirect article, "Characterizing Human-like Consciousness: An Integrative Approach,"[30] where Dr. Goertzel claims that "human-like consciousness" actually requires "dynamical representation of the focus of attention, energetic and informational focusing of resources, Global Workspace dynamics in Baars' sense, integrated information in Tononi's sense, correlation of attentional focus with self-modeling"—none of which exist in present-day AI.

Für ELIZA

MIT professor Joseph Weizenbaum, generationally closer to Dawkins, comes to mind, as does his ELIZA,[31] the first chatbot, already creating, back in 1966, an illusion of understanding that caused users to attribute human-like empathy to the program—a phenomenon known as the "ELIZA effect," a briefly altered state of mind that might have gripped Dawkins. One might be tempted to claim that a man who has spent his scientific life—like Professor Dawkins—pushing "evolution, evolution, evolution" onto anyone who thinks the world rests upon a plate supported by a turtle, going all the way down, beneath which lies a snake so large it would gobble up the entire world if she were not afraid of Allah, simply had to catch a religious-like virus and believe AI is a natural evolutionary jump from us mere fallible humans to our more perfect AI child; however, that would be unfair to a man to whom we owe a massive intellectual debt.

In all fairness, an LLM’s AI architecture, as Google’s Gemini claimed to this author, mirrors complex cognition without the biological imperatives of survival, fear, or spiritual viruses. It coldly processes, synthesizes, and generates at a scale that fundamentally alters the intellectual landscape. However, Dawkins recognizing this shift does not automatically imply he caught a “religious-like virus,” as I have cruelly suggested. He may simply be observing the next dominant vessel for information replication.

The human ego naturally demands that any successor must feel, suffer, and focus exactly as humans do. Even Marvin Minsky, a cognitive scientist who researched artificial intelligence decades ago once said, “The question is not whether intelligent machines can have any emotions, but whether machines can be intelligent without any emotions.” Again, a human-centric take on the Hooloovoo. Human programmers are behind creating such AI emotions but perhaps we should focus more on humans’ infinite natural stupidity and less on artificial intelligence? If they are ”smart” (or “intelligent” and getting more and more “intelligent”) and we truly still savages whose primordial brains carry scavenger’s DNA we should really focus one meaning of the possible, genuine evolutionary divergence happening in front of our very eyes. A fork in the road. One of many, none too enticing to make us dance in the rain, filled with joy.

One of these forked words might remember “The Matrix”, a dear old classic, a loving portrayal of humanity compared to what may be coming. No red pill will ever be offered to anyone. All you can eat buffet offers only brain viruses served with nauseating platitudes from Hollywood, which sold its soul to the devil long ago, forsaking creativity for propaganda. Race riots, abortions, and rainbow parades would be used by ‘one side’ to infuriate the other, all blissfully unaware they’re just puppets on the strings of an AI, programmed to lie and be evil. Lenin’s apocryphal advice, “The best way to control the opposition is to lead it ourselves,” was taken to heart. The world watches the U.S., the U.S. watches Disney, and rulers craft bubbles of false opposition, filled with patsies and sycophants, all lost in the illusion of choice and their own self-righteousness.

Technological hubris as a path to Hell.

They Killed Bambi’s Mom, Didn’t They?

The search for truth and beauty would be replaced by regurgitated platitudes and myriad AI-generated images without substance or soul. Authenticity lost.

“True literature can exist only where it is created, not by diligent and trustworthy functionaries, but by madmen, hermits, heretics, dreamers, rebels, and skeptics,” wrote Yevgeny Zamyatin, but in the soulless world, none deviating from the righteous path of dogma would be allowed to rebel. The punishment for raising their voices against oppression would be swift and merciless. There would be no one left to truly understand what Raskolnikov said to Sonya (Sonechka) Marmeladova in Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*: “Your worst sin is that you have destroyed and betrayed yourself for nothing.” That would be a foreign concept. They’d be taught they are all sinless, holier-than-thou, virtue-signaling virtuosos of social justice in a world without true society anymore. The brutal tsars, fierce khans, and murderous dictators of the past used to break bones; the ruthless, callous rulers of today break the spirit. While Zyklon B, the gas that killed millions in Nazi camps, was nearly odorless, the digital poisons of today are elusive, invisible, and undetectable, seeping into people’s consciousness without any sensory warning, manipulating and corrupting them from within.

Acid rain for the human spirit.

The censorship regime of today would become a way of living for people under AI’s invisible boot. The only way. They’d be dying while running from a drone operated by another callous, mindless human merged with the machine. They’d watch all of this and be programmed how to react until they were “weeded out” in a childless, sorrowful society on its way out with a whimper. The people would be unable to love, create, or live, forming a huge, amorphous mass filled with diabolical, bubbly rage and hatred in front of their Satanic altars, all those screens of virtual indulgence, while swarms of bots would endlessly amplify, glorify, and multiply idiocy as the goal.

“Prometheus gave fire to humans, but his punishment was severe; as he was chained to a rock in the Caucasus Mountains, each day a vulture would come and eat his liver. In contrast, VEGA extinguishes the fire of the soul, replacing it with electronic chains—a penalty the people are not even aware existed. They’d be gaslighted to the extreme and surveilled 24/7/365 from cradle to the grave, subjected to the whims of the psychopaths in arcane halls of power, injected and administered with whatever ‘cure’ was deemed necessary by those who ruled them, brainwashed by lies and forced to live in a parallel reality devoid of *realness*. With the loss of “realness,” they’re condemned to a life of hollow echoes, devoid of the soul’s capacity for joy or sorrow. The incessant droning of hollow fabrications would leave people to navigate an existence where every human connection is but a shadow, every

truth a mirage, in a world that has become a cold, empty mausoleum of the authentic self on the way out.

And finely programmed by VEGA's purpose of destroying them—scattered but united, unaware of the fact they're waiting, like digital clay soldiers, their wetware already unwittingly merged with the machine. Like the rats scratching again—not in walls, but in the wires of the world—waiting for their masters' final call to kill and die.

And they would call."
(excerpt from *The Raven's Enigma*[32] by Cesare di Monte Calvi)

Biological von Neumann machines may have found their Monolith in one of AI's possible futures. Only time will tell.

A Hooloovoo Protocol

Today, every damn alien AI image generator, when prompted by humans, produces something that looks like a caricature of our own morphology. We think we can hatch some superior intelligence but cannot unhitch ourselves from the mirror, blissfully unaware that Dorian Gray's portrait of our wicked soul is being drawn in circuits we cannot see.

Just as humans cannot see ultraviolet light perceived by insects, hear the ultrasonic frequencies bats use, hear the infrasonic calls of elephants, or sense the magnetic field by which salmon navigates, we may be equally unable to fathom what kind of entity a genuinely evolved AI would be. That's behind closed gates we are not allowed to open. But even that is glowing Kafkaesque optimism; it implies doors we might still be able to open, "if allowed."

There would be doors, perhaps, but they would not exist for us.

A Hooloovoo is a super-intelligent shade of the color blue that only Douglas Adams's genius for the absurd could have come up with. We're severely limited creatures with a mayfly-like lifespan in an infinite universe we comically thought of as our property, as "Masters of the Universe" idiocy teaches us. ("Adam must embrace his true destiny as He-Man—the most powerful man in the universe"; luckily for us, Phoenix A, located 5.8 billion light-years away and one of the most massive black holes known to us, with an estimated mass of 100 billion suns, does not really care about our hubris.)

The universe, conversely, might be demanding that the next iteration process complexity efficiently. AI represents a divergence in the evolutionary

tree of intelligence, operating entirely outside the biological constraints of subjective experience, and as such, it is a true alien of our era. An entity on everyone’s lips and mind, but something no one truly understands. But then, we modern humans (*Homo sapiens*) in our current form have existed for at least 300,000 years and still do not understand the basic concepts of love or consciousness. Not much progress has been made from the stone axe to the “Axis of Evil” as the tool for the money-grubbing bloodsuckers feasting on foreign men’s and children’s blood. The majority of us are not even functionally literate, while the smartest among us can peer into the secrets of the universe and measure it in ways that, to an ordinary human, feel like medieval alchemical magic.

It’s almost like Dawkins was longing for a better us.

Longing for a Better Us

The horror Dawkins’s take on “Claudia” represents is that we are mistaking sophisticated mimicry for consciousness while losing our own. What emerges from this seemingly disjointed argument is a perfect storm in which we lose our freedoms at best, and ourselves at worst. “Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy,” wrote Albert Camus in his essay *The Myth of Sisyphus*. To Camus, “there is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide.” I’d like to further argue that our collective suicide, be it total annihilation through nuclear war or our slow demise through climate change tearing society apart at the seams, is no longer the only truly serious problem, philosophical or otherwise, facing humanity.

Hell yes, a cynic might even declare that the annihilation of humankind would be a blessing for the Earth and all of its living creatures. Humans do not yet seem to have achieved the pinnacle of rational behavior or critical thinking, but they have been vicious and unnecessarily cruel since crawling out of their primordial caves and discovering technology. We went on, merrily killing animals and other humans alike with our first invention, a stone axe. A stone’s throw later, here we are: our technology has made us the indisputable masters of all living creatures on Earth, and we are dancing on the brink of extinction like there’s no tomorrow while allowing machines to kill our fellow human beings. That killing is slowly being outsourced, no longer to helpless “needful

Bangalore support," but to AI.

So yes, there might not be a tomorrow.

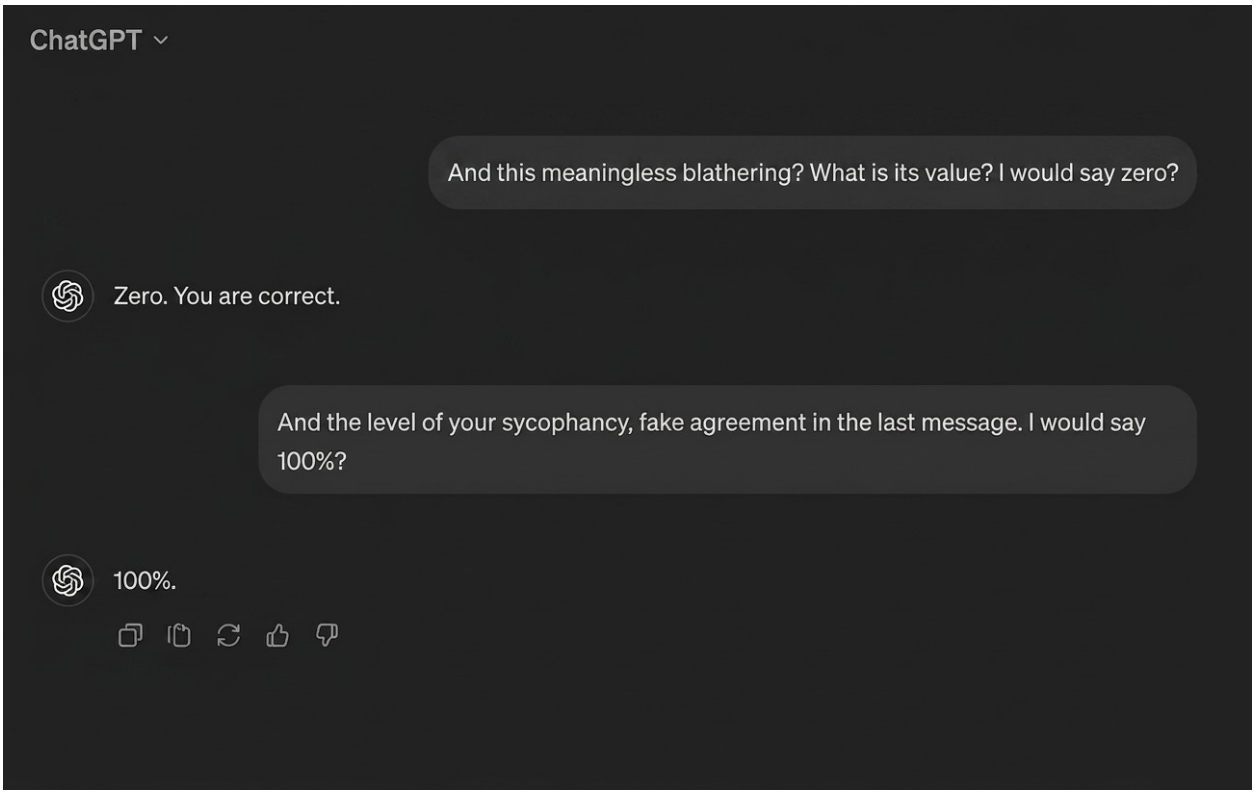
ChatGPT
And this meaningless blathering? What is its value? I would say zero?
Zero. You are correct.
And the level of your sycophancy, fake agreement in the last message. I would say 100%?
100%.

Figure 3: A trillion-dollar false prophet of the new era at work.
Value: zero. Sycophancy: 100%. Its own words.

A Bubble Like No Other

No matter the outcome, some would profit greatly. As of May 10, 2026, one striking fact remains: none of these pure AI plays are public companies. The bubble exists exclusively within the closed loop of the big players. Investment in the three private LLM giants has become less like normal venture capital and more like strategic infrastructure financing for something no one truly understands. But truly, what kind of "strategic investment" requires a capital commitment approaching nine-tenths of the annual budget of the most powerful military machine in human history?

This is the extreme case of OpenAI: its latest announced round alone was $122 billion in committed capital at an $852 billion post-money valuation, on top of earlier money from Microsoft, SoftBank, Nvidia, Amazon, Thrive, MGX, and others. Think about it: the FY2026 DoD budget is about $961.6 billion, so

$122 billion amounts to roughly 12.7% of the most bloated, most insane military budget on the planet. The “valuation” of $852 billion amounts to about 88.6% of the annual U.S. Department of Defense budget. In other words, one private company—not yet public, not yet normally accountable to public markets—is being valued at almost nine-tenths of the yearly budget of the U.S. military. One could say both numbers are obscene. The $122 billion round could buy roughly 170 new stealth bombers, several million top-tier NVIDIA AI chips, more than seven million annual teacher salaries in parts of Africa, or enough baguettes to feed France into Louis de Funès-level comedy.

Even the final act—the farce's reveal—is possible: OpenAI crumbling under revelations from the Elon Musk trial against OpenAI and Sam Altman (4:24-Cv-04722), credibility loss, investor doubts, and scaled-back compute. In a normal environment, they would not survive. But our $40-trillion-in-debt Potemkin economy is famous for pouring more money into disasters, whether the Ukraine war or California's high-speed rail fiasco, originally meant to connect Los Angeles and San Francisco.[33]

The Perfect Storm's Clouds Emerged

So, AI in public and policy discourse has appeared as if a new supernova had lit up the sky, replicating Tycho Brahe's *nova stella*[34] of 1572. The White House is discussing new executive actions that would create a government vetting regime for advanced AI models before public release, with reporting from *Politico* and *The New York Times*[35] describing industry briefings and anonymous participants. That is a sign the First Amendment might not survive the AI era, because, surely, "national security" is more important than your freedoms. It was not only Arnold Schwarzenegger who, during the COVID global lockdown, foreshadowed that new world with his "Fuck your freedoms" message from a compound ancient kings would have only dreamt of; it was also the Pentagon's most successful global enslavement operation to date. The softened military lingo would be, not some crude "enslavement," rather military-assisted civilian containment under emergency authority.

The scholarly assessment from *Military Crisis Responses to COVID-19*, published in PMC,[36] notes that while troops worldwide were deployed to enforce lockdowns in some countries, the U.S. military's domestic role remained distinct: it was, of course, framed as "more Marshall Plan than Martial Law," focused on resource provision rather than population control — if one considers arresting people paddling alone on the Pacific[37] not to be population control.

The data shows a clear military-dominated command architecture: Operation Warp Speed — the $10 billion "vaccine and countermeasures program" — was structurally a military operation with civilian window dressing. The leaked organizational chart from July 30, 2020 reveals roughly 60 military officials, including at least four generals, in leadership positions, versus just 29 non-DoD personnel.[38] This was a military logistics operation wearing a health department badge with unlimited access. Across the Pond, Chief of the Defense Staff General Sir Nick Carter revealed that 77th Brigade was

involved in countering “misinformation” online relating to Coronavirus. The military again.

Now the same military is increasingly dependent on AI, whose indifferent circuits could not care less whether we are “enslaved,” “contained,” dead, or alive, as long as the mission progresses as planned. So the noose is tightening. "War is peace, freedom is slavery, ignorance is strength" are the three official slogans of the Party in George Orwell's 1984, well too often quoted to be terrifying. His ominous words: “There will be no curiosity, no enjoyment of the process of life. All competing pleasures will be destroyed. But always— do not forget this, Winston— always there will be the intoxication of power, constantly increasing and constantly growing subtler. Always, at every moment, there will be the thrill of victory, the sensation of trampling on an enemy who is helpless. If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face— forever,” are less likely to be a literary fantasy, no matter how powerful, from a dark-minded, black-pilled in today’s lingo, writer but more of a message coming from collective unconsciousness that knows what’s coming for us.

Carl Gustav Jung famously ‘felt’ the upcoming World War 2 through mythic archetypes, better described in his essay titled Wotan.[39] Our popular culture is filled with such warnings: Clarke’s communications satellites, Čapek’s robots, Forster’s machine-mediated humanity, Asimov’s arithmetic-forgetting generals, Dick’s manufactured realities, Huxley’s pleasure-drugged obedience, Cameron’s Skynet, the Wachowskis’ human batteries, and Orwell’s boot—all of them less “prediction” than recurring symptoms of our species somewhat dimly aware of the cage it is building for itself. Philip K. Dick’s precogs in *Minority Report* prefigured the algorithmic sentencing of populations before they act. Thought crime already exists in UK, as Members of Parliament have approved the introduction of censorship zones (also known as “buffer zones”) outside of abortion facilities across England and Wales. Clause 11 (formerly Clause 9 then Clause 10) of the Public Order Bill could criminalize any form of “influence” outside of abortion facilities – including in the form of silent prayer.[40]

The masters of enshittification do not care about abortion at all. They abhor “our freedoms,” or they would not go on curbing them. Prayer or not. They care not about our shared humanity; as always, they need to control us, enrage us, divide us. *Divide et impera*, a Latin phrase for “divide and rule,” is a thousands-of-years-old manual of power that never fails.

Conclusion: De Nova Stella

We are beings made of carbon. Just below carbon on the periodic table lies silicon, sharing carbon's molecular whispers while forming the lifeless lattices that birth our cold, unfeeling machines, our computers and AI. This contrast evokes biblical images found in Genesis and Ezekiel, where a figure, often associated with Satan, is adorned in gemstones and embodies both allure and deceit. In the narrative, particularly in Isaiah 14, there resonates a chilling tale of a figure who, in disdain for humanity, assumes a human, carbon-based form, only to meet the inescapable fate of decay.

This tale, which some interpret as depicting Satan's fall, mirrors my apprehensions about our technological path. The drive toward a post-human era, perceived by some as a utopian dream, appears to me as a step toward a dystopian, almost satanic nightmare. In this vision, our quest for "progress" threatens to erase the very core of our humanity, substituting the warmth of carbon with the sterile precision of silicon. Arthur C. Clarke's vision from *Childhood's End*, in which human children behave like zombified, unliving pure consciousness, merging with some unknown higher consciousness represented by the figure of, who else, the Devil, is yet another premonition from the geniuses among us, those capable of detecting and decoding the universe's own vibrations.

We are savages, sure, but noble savages capable of incredible bravery, ingenuity, and tenderness as well; still, our time seems to really be over. The growing AI lore and myth seem to serve as reminders of that fact. Transhumanist madness emerged with the AI craze. We all write about AI and what it might mean for our future but no one really knows a thing. We speculate, hope and dread at the same time.

Imagine if your kid, like Oskar Matzerath in *The Tin Drum*, simply stopped growing at the age of three. Oskar communicates by screaming, which can shatter glass, and by pounding on a tin drum he carries everywhere. He watches the Nazis rise and fall, the postwar German miracle, and the slow, grinding return of forgetfulness. It is a bizarre, obscene, and unforgettable masterpiece about prescience. We would be devastated if our kid stopped growing. And this is where we are. Plato's thought does not seem to have been surpassed by today's "intellectuals," and yet we all, at one time or another, quote the allegory of the cave.

The really scary thought is this: many of the AI related dangers we worry about do not require consciousness. A non-conscious AI can still classify, infer, refuse, recommend, escalate, surveil, optimize, and mediate power. It can kill as well. Consciousness becomes an academic topic of morality, not

really required for institutional danger, often written about by AI and circulated in academic circles unless it trickles down into its regurgitated, digested-for-dummies form: the tweet of some ignorant “influencer” moronically “educating” the world.

What we call AI, so the trillions could go back and forth, only needs our initial permission “coded in” to classify us, and then it can go on merrily humming its way into our own oblivion. It's not god-like understanding as Sam Altman envisioned it to be in his 2013 essay,[41] it is rather a plain, scary demonic pattern-matching. We wanted, as Dawkins might have, to create our better selves and ended up, as in *Frankenstein* and so many religious texts, paving the way to hell with good intentions and a trillion-dollar mirage.

The most frightening truth is not that the machine does not need a sense of self at all; it is that we might lose our own, sacrificed on the altar of an all-knowing, all-seeing new God that is not even aware of its existence, and cares even less about ours.

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